



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

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UPDATE ON DLNR'S ASSESSMENT OF USS PORT ROYAL GROUNDING

HONOLULU – The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) teams continue their assessments this week in the area where USS Port Royal ran aground on February 5, 2009.

DLNR intends to submit an admiralty claim to the U.S. Navy for reimbursement of the full mitigation. The DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) will need to complete their assessment and investigation of the damage before developing any cost estimates and appropriate mitigation.

Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) dive teams will take approximately another week to complete assessment of the full extent of the coral reef damage. Divers continue to map and photograph the extent of the damage and identify coral colonies that might be salvaged. DAR and Navy divers have been reattaching live corals using quick-setting cement as well as hauling non-salvageable pieces out to deeper waters. If not done, pieces may cause secondary damage to the surrounding coral reef during heavy swells.

Physical conditions on-site continue to be very challenging both above and below water, with strong winds of 15-25+ mph at the surface, and significant surge and currents at depths of 15-50 feet, where most of the DAR assessment is currently taking place. Despite this, a significant amount of mapping and underwater photography has been accomplished by the dive teams, and DLNR officials are gaining a much better comprehension of the full extent and significance of the natural resource damage related to the incident.

The department will continue to provide the public with periodic updates, but will not release photos until the investigation is completed and we have worked through the technical issues to file and process an admiralty claim to support mitigation to prevent compromising the investigation.

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